UNDER FIRE

A European War story based on the drama of ROI COOPER MEGRUE

SYNOPSIS.

—11—

The chief characters are Ethel Willoughby, Henry Streetman and Capt. Larry Redmond. The minor characters are Sir George Wagstaff of the British admiralty and Charles Brown, a New York newspaper correspondent. Ethel, a resident of Sir George's household, secretly married to Streetman, a German spy, though she did not know him as such. Captain Redmond, her old lover, returns to England after long absence. From him she learns the truth about Streetman; furthermore, that he has betrayed her simply to learn naval secrets. The European war breaks out. Ethel prepares to accompany Streetman to Brussels as a German spy in order to get revenge and serve England. Captain Redmond, Ethel and Charlie Brown turn up at a Belgian inn as the German army comes. She is Madame De Lorde. She begins to work with a French spy. The Germans appear at the inn.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

"Here, please!" she said to the lieutenant. From the bosom of her gown she had drawn forth a small gold medal, which hung upon a ribbon about her neck.

He looked at it closely, for Lieutenant Baum was no man to take unnecessary risks. Thoroughness was his middle name.

"From the German secret service, the Wilhelmstrasse!" he exclaimed, when he had satisfied himself. "Your pardon, madame! I did not understand." And he bowed deeply.

She acknowledged his apology with the slightest of nods. And with an assumed calm that she was far from feeling, she said to him in a confidential manner:

"I am here on a confidential mission, and one thing at once I must know. Tell me, lieutenant, by which road do we march to attack the fortress at the frontier?"

"By the left fork, madame," he answered without hesitation. That token from the Wilhelmstrasse — obtained from Streetman—had quite disarmed his suspicions.

"Good! Good!" Ethel exclaimed. "I have studied the country hereabouts. That is the best way. . . . Good night!"

"Madame shall not be disturbed further," the lieutenant promised. "I will explain to the major when he returns."

"Thank you so much! You have been so very nice to me!"

"Madame is welcome," he said, with another low bow.

Smiling happily, Ethel left him. She congratulated herself, both because she had escaped detection and because she had obtained the information that was so vital to the French.

As he watched her departure, the young German officer smiled likewise. It was good to have a few minutes' talk with a lady of his own class, after the canaille with which he had been obliged to mingle since the great drive began. And, puffing out his chest to its largest dimensions, he stepped into the street. In his complacency over work that he considered well done he had entirely forgotten that there still remained another suspect to question—the innkeeper's American gentleman.

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Brown Finds His War.

Lieutenant Baum had been gone but a short time when Sergeant Schmidt appeared, bringing Brown with him. The German "noncom" looked about in vain for his lieutenant, who had ordered him to fetch the American. But only two of his mates, Otto and Hans, remained in the room, standing guard at the street door.

Sergeant Schmidt was nonplused. It was not like Lieutenant Baum to fail one like that. And he gurgled a few throaty German words in his surprise. There seemed nothing to do then but assume the task himself—the duty of examining his prisoner, for so he regarded the interested Mr. Brown, who was already making mental notes of the proceedings, which he intended to use for the embellishment of the stories he would send his paper later.

Charlie had paused just inside the door through which he had entered the room. And now the sergeant beckoned to him violently.

"Komm hier!" he commanded.

At that peremptory command Mr. Brown regarded him with mild surprise and a total lack of comprehension. But the sign language was plain enough. So Charlie drew near to that formidable-looking automaton.

"Was thust du hier?" Sergeant Schmidt demanded fiercely.

Mr. Brown appeared to consider him a huge joke. At least he glanced past his frowning interrogator at Hans and Otto and laughed outright.

"I don't get you. Why don't you speak English?" he replied.

But the sergeant stolidly repeated his question.

"Oh, shut up!" Mr. Brown said impatiently.

"Du bist ein Englaender," Schmidt announced with a malevolent glare at his captive.

"No, I'm an American," he explained.

"Amerikaner?" the sergeant repeated dubiously.

"Yes, Americane!" Charlie mimicked him, congratulating himself that the German language offered fewer difficulties than the French. He even began to pride himself on being a natural linguist. And in order to convince this fellow beyond a possibility of doubt, he reached a hand toward his hip pocket, where he carried his identification papers.

Sergeant Schmidt's eagle eye no sooner detected the move of hand toward hip than he thrust his revolver into Mr. Brown's stomach.

"Halt!"

That was something that Charlie understood without difficulty, too. He raised both hands above his head as high as he could get them, while a look of ineffable disgust suffused his face.

"You d——n fool," he exclaimed, "I'm not reaching for a gun. These are my passports. Look! Papers!" With a shake and a twist he managed to throw his coat back from his right hip. And Sergeant Schmidt then proceeded to relieve him of the bulky packet that projected from the pocket. He looked at them with a scowl.

"Ah, you are Franzoesisch!" he declared, still in his native tongue, for he knew no other.

"I'm what?" Charlie inquired.

"Franzoesisch! You are no Amerikaner."

Charlie grasped only the last word.

"Yes, that's right—Americane, right from the corner of Forty-second street and Broadway; and, believe me, I wish I was right back there right now."

"What do you say?" the sergeant asked him.

"None of your d——n business. . . . You bonehead." . . . Mr. Brown was quite enjoying himself, abusing that walking arsenal with impunity. "Have a cigarette?" he asked, holding out his case.

Sergeant Schmidt was not above accepting one, even from the enemy. And he thanked Charlie in a voice as gentle as a bass drum.

"Gee, I'd like to give you one good wallop on the nose just for luck," the American remarked longingly.

Then Schmidt suddenly snatched off Mr. Brown's hat.

"Nix on the Herrmann stuff—what are you doing?" Charlie demanded. He began to feel as if he were taking part in a slapstick vaudeville skit.

The sergeant had his face buried inside the hat. He was looking for clues.

"Englisch!" he sputtered the next moment.

"Of course it's English!" Charlie retorted. "It cost me two-and-six," he added, regarding the rough handling of his straw with indignation.

Sergeant Schmidt leaned over, and, seizing Charlie's coat by the collar, he pulled it back from his neck while he examined the label.

"English also. Spion! Thou art an English spy!"

His trusty henchmen, Hans and Otto, together with their corporal, brought their guns up to their sides; and, hissing "Spion!" in the most sinister manner imaginable, they all three approached Charlie threateningly.

Mr. Brown suddenly changed his mind about the vaudeville. It seemed to him that possibly he had been unwittingly cast for a tragedy.

"Spion—spion!" he repeated. "Good grief, you don't mean spy?"

"Spy, spy—ja wohl," said Schmidt. "Komm hier!"

He took hold of Charlie's arm and faced him about so that he confronted the trio of formidable soldiers. And then the sergeant ordered them to load.

Charlie observed the operation with increasing alarm.

"Good God, you're not going to shoot me!" he cried. "I'm not English. I'm not a spy." And remembering all at once that the girl whom he had first met at the house of Sir George Wagstaff in London could speak German, he yelled at the top of his voice, "Madame de Lorde! Madame de Lorde!"

The two privates were aiming at him now. And he faced them indignantly. His anger was already beginning to get the better of his fear.

"Say—if you shoot me there are a hundred million people back there who're going to be sore as hell!" he snarled. "They'll come over here and blow you off the face of the earth."

At an order from the sergeant the corporal and one of the privates then grasped their victim and hustled him across the room.

"Say—what are you going to do with me?" Charlie asked. "Let me alone!" And again he called loudly for Ethel Willoughby.

To his immense relief, at that moment she appeared.

"What are you doing?" she asked the sergeant.

"It is not your affair," he retorted gruffly.

She showed her medal to him—the medal from the Wilhelmstrasse.

"Do you know that?" she inquired.

He did. And immediately he cried "Halt" to Charlie's captors. They released him at once.

"Gosh, I'm glad you're not deaf," Mr. Brown told Ethel with immense relief, as he crossed the room to where she stood.

"He is an English spy," the sergeant protested to the girl.

"No, no, no—you are mistaken," she said. "He is an American."

"They're going to shoot me!" Charlie told her. He did not yet feel safely out of the woods. "For heaven's sake, tell them I'm not a spy."

"I have just told them," she assured him.

"I know. Make sure! Tell 'em again!" he urged her. "Ask if there isn't someone who speaks English."

Questioned as to whether there were not some officer who understood English, the sergeant informed Ethel that Major von Brenig knew the hateful language.

"For the love of Mike, get him here!" Charlie besought her, when she explained to him.

While Sergeant Schmidt betook himself away in order to summon the major, Charlie Brown turned to Ethel with an air of great relief.

"Well, I was looking for a war, and I certainly picked out the right spot, didn't I?" he asked.

"I suppose mistakes like this are bound to happen. But haven't you papers to prove your identity?" she inquired.

"Oh, yes—yes! French passports, and an English hat and English clothes! All I needed to really finish me was a Russian blouse," he said with a grin. "Seriously though," he went on, "I do want to thank you." He offered her his hand.

"It was nothing," she said, as she shook hands with him.

Before the major arrived Ethel left him, after promising that she would not go so far away that he might not call her in case he needed her assistance again.

The sight of the fatherly appearing major, whose bearded face soon showed in the doorway, went far to restore Charlie's equanimity.

"The spy—where is the spy?" Major von Brenig asked the sergeant, who followed close at his heels.

Charlie Brown did not wait for the "noncom" to answer. He stepped forward expectantly.

"Are you Major von Brenig—and do you speak English?" he inquired.

"I am, and I do," the officer said.

Mr. Brown smiled at him winningly.

"Fitzsimmons there has my passports," he announced, pointing to the lanky sergeant.

Major von Brenig took the papers from the sergeant and looked them over.

"They seem to be in good order," he said—"vised by the American consul in Paris."

"And here's a letter from the paper I work for," Charlie added, handing the major an envelope.

The German officer merely looked at the imprint in one corner. He did not even take the letter from the American.

"It's a good newspaper. I've often read it," he remarked. And he returned the passport to its owner. "Now what is the trouble?" he asked.

"These guys were just going to shoot me as an English spy," Charlie informed him, with an indignant glance at the soldiers.

The major laughed in his face.

"You English?" he cried. "No one but an American ever said 'guy'!" He appeared greatly amused. "I am glad my men did not make the mistake of killing you," he said pleasantly.

"You've nothing on me," Charlie told him.

CHAPTER XVI.

Interviewing the Major.

The sergeant saluted, clicked his spurs together, moved majestically to a position in front of the cigar case, and clicked his heels again. Judging by his movements, one might almost have supposed him to be some great mechanical doll. But Charlie Brown was quite certain that he, for one, had no desire to play with him.

"I feel much better now," he told the major.

"I can imagine," the other said.

"You speak very good English," the American remarked generously.

"Why not?" the officer asked. "I spent three years at Columbia."

Mr. Brown's newspaper instincts crowded to the front again.

"By Jove! You're a German! You're in the army—you speak English! . . . It's too good a chance to miss! Say, can I interview you?"

Major von Brenig regarded him curiously for a moment. He seemed to consider that the American would be a satisfactory person to talk to, for he said presently:

"Yes—for I should like America to understand, to realize what Germany is fighting for."

"Fine!" Charlie exulted. "Can Germany win?" he demanded, looking up at Major von Brenig in his most professional manner.

"It is inevitable—there is no chance to fail," the officer replied.

"And what is Germany going to gain from the war—if she wins?"

"When she wins, you mean," the major corrected him stiffly.

"Well, when she wins," Charlie conceded.

"She will be the greatest power in the world!"

"Except the United States!" Charlie interposed.

"Do not let us discuss your country, sir! You are my guest."

Charlie rose and bowed to the German.

"I get you!" he said. "Oh, just a minute!" he added, since the major appeared to consider the interview at an end. "And what about England?" he asked, dropping into the chair once more.

That question was one that the German officer was only too ready to take up.

"What army has England?" And straightway he gave the answer. "None! In only one thing is England our superior—in lies and intrigues! There she has always been our master; but she will not fight. That is for France and Russia to do. But if the war lasts they will grow weary of being the catspaw. . . . England is a fine example of your happy American phrase, 'Let George do it!'"

"And the French?" Charlie persisted.

"The French! For forty years they have been thinking of what some day they would do to Germany; and while they thought, we have planned, we have worked—and now today we are ready—and they are not!"

"You seem very confident," Charlie told him.

"Why not? . . . For forty years our men of brains have been planning a system—the most marvelous system in the world!"

"What a pity it isn't devoted to peace instead of war," the American said somewhat pensively. All the while, as they talked, the boom of field guns in the distance punctuated their sentences.

"In the end it will be for peace," Major von Brenig said gravely, "the peace of the world. For this is a just war—and justice must triumph."

"But what of these poor people—these noncombatants—who streamed through here a little while ago?"

"It is the habit of an invaded country to proclaim the invaders as barbarians," the Teuton replied warmly. "But we Germans are not barbarians. We are a simple people fighting only for our fatherland."

"And the ruined towns—destroyed homes—and civilians shot?"

But Major von Brenig had always an answer ready. He was an honest man; and he was convinced of the justice of the German cause.

"If we are fighting soldiers we treat them as soldiers," he pointed out. "But if men or women lurk behind closed shutters or on housetops to shoot our men we shall burn the house they live in and if there is resistance we shall kill all those who resist. It is regrettable, but we must stop guerrilla warfare. We must fight under the laws of civilization."

Another roar as of distant thunder interrupted Charlie Brown's next question.

"And you call that civilization?" he demanded, while the windows of the Lion d'Or rattled under the shock of the distant cannonading.

"I do!"

"I am your guest," Charlie said. So far as he was concerned, he had heard enough. In fact, he had heard almost too much for his own peace of mind. "I think we'd better not continue this discussion or we might get into an argument—and that wouldn't be diplomatic."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Earache.

Dip a piece of cotton wool in sweet oil, then into black pepper; putting this in the ear proves a quick remedy.

Nose Bleed.—Roll a piece of soft paper quite hard and pack hard between the upper lip and the gum, and in a few minutes the bleeding will stop.

Hoarseness.—Beat the white of an egg, add the juice of a lemon and sweeten with sugar. A teaspoonful at a time.

The average height of the land of Switzerland above the sea level is 4,283 feet.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of Sunday School Course, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 22

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA.

LESSON TEXT—Acts 26 (vv. 1, 24-32). GOLDEN TEXT—I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.—Acts 26:19.

It is possible to use the Bible either as a music box or a telephone. We should let it speak the words of the Lord Jesus to us and our pupils. This lesson occurred probably A. D. 59, perhaps in August, the day after last Sunday's lesson. This was the same hall where Agrippa had heard the people calling him a god (Acts 12). Paul, the center of all interest, is chained to his Roman guardians. The prisoner has been vehemently accused as one worthy of death and had appealed to Caesar, but Festus, not being well acquainted with Jewish laws and customs, could not make any definite charge against him before the Roman court. Hence he turns him over to Agrippa, who was well acquainted with matters of Jewish law.

I. Paul, the Preacher (vv. 1-23). This was one of the great occasions in the life of this great man. Paul was preaching to a king and a woman of great influence (a sermon which little changed their lives evidently), and also to the coming ages. This king and queen were wedded to their infamy. God had in mind on that day an audience in comparison with which that which Paul saw faded into oblivion. Notice his argument. (1) He begins with his own experience. In these verses there are over forty personal pronouns.

Men do not need so much light as they do need heat, and Paul was speaking out of the hot throbs of his personal experience. Paul stood before them a living miracle, an incarnate argument. We might tremble at the doctrine of the resurrection. He knew it was a marvelous thing that God should raise the dead, but that change had been wrought in him which was equivalent to the miracle of raising one from the grave.

Paul's plea was for the Roman as well as the Jew. Considering his personal testimony, he declares that he is a true Jew of the strictest sect (vv. 4-8), and as such he lived in the "hope of the promise" as predicted by Isaiah and Daniel. That promise has been fulfilled in Jesus, the crucified, who rose again from the dead, and Paul adds, "I have seen him, for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." (2) (vv. 9-15) Paul tells the audience that he, himself, was once a zealous persecutor of the Christians, more so than those who are now persecuting him, "being exceedingly mad against them." He then relates his Damascus journey and the conversation held on the road with the risen Lord.

The gospel Paul preached was to lead men into the kingdom of God that they might receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who were fitted for that inheritance, who were the sanctified. For this cause the Jews went about to kill him.

II. Agrippa, the Doubter (vv. 24-32). Five ways are suggested as to the reception of Paul's message. The high priest's way was to hate him and oppose. Felix's way was "go thy way this time. When I have a more convenient season I will call." Festus' way (vv. 24-26) was to charge Paul with madness. Much learning (literally, many writings) was turning him mad, making him a lunatic, a dreamer, one who lived in the atmosphere of wild imaginings. Paul's reply was not harsh. "Most noble Festus" (Am. R.) "I am not mad, but speak words of soberness," words of eternal life and spiritual life (of sound sense) that were true and earnest. Paul thereupon appeals to King Agrippa to confirm his statements (v. 2-6). The crazy man is he who lives for this world rather than for eternity. The devil has cheated many a man out of eternal life by the method which Festus followed. He has also cheated many a Christian out of the larger life in the same way. Paul's appeal to Agrippa (vv. 27-29) is very suggestive.

Some people believe that the contents of the prophecies are of no present day value, and some are trying to break their force. Some declare they cannot be true, yet these prophecies are the ones that declare that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." The literal translation of Agrippa's answer is, "In a little thou persuadest me to be a Christian." It is said that Agrippa said this in sarcasm, but, like many another attempted jest, it revealed the real state of the heart.